



**DEPUTY MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**Speech by the Deputy Minister of Tourism Hon Fish Mahlalela on the occasion of
National Tourism Career Expo**

19 September 2019

Program Director
The MEC of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Hon Keneetswe Mosenogi
Executive Mayor of Bojanala District Municipality and the Mayoral Committee Members ...
Executive Mayor of Rustenburg Local Municipality and the Mayoral Committee members
Councillors present
Chairpersons of the Board CATHSSETA and Board members
Chairperson of the Board of North West Tourism and Board Members
CEO of CATHSSETA
CEO of North West Tourism Board
HODs and DDGs present
Representatives of North West Department of Education
Representatives of all Provinces present
Industry Captains and Tourism stakeholders
Media Houses present.
NTCE Partners and Officials
Institutions of Learning
Learners, Students, Educators and Lecturers
All Exhibitors

Good morning
Dumelang

We have converged here in Bojanala District, North West Province, for the second year installation of this important National Tourism Career Expo. The NTCE is on its 11th year, having been hosted in the, Kwazulu Natal Province, Eastern Cape Province and the Free State Province. All these mentioned provinces have hosted the Career Expo for three years each respectively. In 2020 we are completing the last leg of the third year of North West Province as a host.

Program Director, it is interesting and fulfilling to have the NTCE hosted in Bojanala District, a tourism hub of North West province. I am actually advised that the word "Bojanala" literally means Tourism. Bojanala is a host to internationally acclaimed Sun City super bowl, the largest casino and gaming complex in the country, the Pilanesberg volcano which developed more than million years ago, Hartbeespoort and Madikwe game reserves. We are indeed hosted in one of the best tourism district of our country

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As we have said during the NTCE Media launch, we are extremely delighted as government for the journey traversed so far since the inception of the National Tourism Career Expo, as the impact of NTCE is so visible in our skills audit and employment absorption in various industries of the tourism sector

One of the reasons the NTCE was started is because of the outcomes of a learner drop out research conducted in 2007, which reflected a disturbing trend of a drop in numbers of new entrants into tertiary levels. After KZN, which was the first province to host the NTCE, the numbers increased. In the final year the NTCE attracted more than 20 000 learners in total over three years, and these learners were presented with opportunities to choose tourism as a career of choice.

In the Eastern Cape the success of the Youth Business Zone was the highlight and The success story of the NTCE. The are two young unemployed graduates that were supported with business training and received some financial business support.

In the Free State, there was an opportunity for the then Premier to prioritise the initiative and support for learners and graduates, particularly those living with disability.

Between then and now, learner registration and success at matric levels has increased year by year. In one participating province, the Northern Cape, we received feedback that the quality of their matric results had drastically improved.

The theme of this expo: "Broadening Your Horizons through Tourism Opportunities" is reflective of the skills revolution we are currently embarking upon as a country. Tourism is an industry capable of mass absorption of semi-skilled and skilled labour.

Skills development is not only about enhancing a country's competitiveness, but also an integral part of larger development processes that have poverty alleviation and job creation as their core. Any government that cares about its people, such as ours, will have poverty alleviation and job creation as its core mandate, and develop mechanisms to deal with that. In this case, tourism is one of such important mechanisms, hence President Ramaphosa in his state of the nation address has identified tourism as an apex industry to grow our economy. For us to achieve this, we need skilled and semi-skilled workforce.

Over and above that, the government is also being called upon by the ruling party in its manifesto, to take concrete steps to bridge the gap between skills and the labour market, including the implementation of mass apprenticeship opportunities for young men and women

Skills development is therefore an essential instrument of public policy to eradicate poverty and build equity, particularly given that in a globalised economy such as ours, lack of skills is an increasingly powerful element of social exclusion.

We have committed to building a developmental state that efficiently guide national economic development by mobilising the resources of society at large, through building a strong public service, creating an investor friendly environment and supporting small businesses. A trained and skilled population, particularly in tourism as a career choice, will therefore enable us to realise this coherent and developmental state we talk about.

The skills revolution is a process that will enable us to confront challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Furthermore, this process plays a central role in ensuring the effective and sustainable transformation and development of the tourism industry in our country, in ensuring that poor South Africans begin to benefit from this industry. This is my immediate interest that the historically disadvantaged people are at the forefront of the tourism industry in all its manifestations, it be accommodation, nature reserves, ocean economy, tourism attractions, aviation and transport, beverage and wholesale industries.

The NDP envisages an increase in economic participation by rural areas, and tourism was identified as one of the contributors to achieve this. The NDP also identified tourism and culture as critical to the overall economy, and most importantly, employment creation

The knowledge economy requires profoundly new ways of thinking, working and living. These include building new capacities for the entire nation

It is for this reason that legislative and policy framework for developing human resource capacity in our country recognises that both government and private sector must ensure transformation of the workplace with specific focus on the previously disadvantaged groups. Government has therefore established South African Qualification Authority and National Qualification Framework to recognise skills and compliance.

We want to see change and progress, and here are the young people that our democracy has enabled them to be in schools, TVET colleges and universities, to help us realise that vision. As Nelson Mandela said; - "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". We call upon learners as the future of our country to elect tourism aligned academic streams as a career of choice.

To the industry stakeholders, we say to you on this occasion of the NTCE, that tourism is government led, private sector driven and community based. It is for this reason that the private sector must drive a process of absorbing our youth as and when they become skilled.

This is important for a developing country such as ours for a number of reasons.

Firstly, if tourism is to reach its potential in contributing to socio-economic development then it requires a sufficiently skilled national workforce to benefit from the job and business opportunities presented by the industry.

Secondly, tourism is an exceptionally competitive industry and the level of service and professionalism, as well as the level of innovation offered, are key variables that determine a country's success in attracting and growing its share of the tourism market.

Thirdly, tourism is an industry in which comparative advantage can be created. Raising levels of efficiency and service through the improvement of education and training is very key to our success.

However, as government we note with great concern that food and beverage sector of the tourism industry has a tendency to import cheap labour for skills that is readily available in our country. This undermines the efforts both government and progressive private sector are making, to ensure the readiness and availability of skilled young people.

We therefore have to take a decisive and deliberate action as government to stop this importing of labour by some sections of the private sector, because we cannot train and skill our youth, only for them not to be absorbed by the industry even when the demand for skilled personnel is there in this growing tourism industry.

In many cases investors have concentrated on developing the 'hardware' necessary for the tourism industry: buildings and infrastructure such as hotels, aviation and transportation. But the 'software', the trained personnel needed to deliver tourism services, has often been given a lower priority. The two are interlinked, and if we focus on one without the other we would certainly not be successful.

The vision of the Tourism Sector Human Resource Development Strategy is to have an appropriately skilled tourism workforce offering excellent visitor experiences and contributing to the inclusive growth of the tourism economy in our country.

I therefore wish to commend and thank Tourism Human Resource Development Unit in my Department, Department of Tourism in North West under the capable leadership of MEC Mosenogi and the CATHSSETA, for prioritising this important aspect of skills development through career choices.

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Programme Director, allow me to conclude with the wise words of a Brazilian Author, Chris Matakas, the words of which I dedicate to the Learners, the educators and tourism practitioners alike. Chris Matakas laments that “the best yardstick for our progress is not other people, but ourselves. Am I better than I was yesterday? this is the only question worth asking. As long as you go to bed at night a better practitioner than the one who woke up the previous morning, you have succeeded. Your worth should have nothing to do with how your progress stacks up relative to another”

I look forward to seeing you in future as tourism practitioners and entrepreneurs, ready to prosper in this beautiful country.

The skills revolution remains an integral part of the work of government and I look forward to the exciting National Tourism Career Expo. We wish you the best in your interactions in the coming three days

I thank You.